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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: DPRK U.S. IRAQ RUSSIA-GEORGIA NPT G-8 SRI
 LANKA U.S.-SPACE EUROPE-MUSLIMS GERMANY-KURNAZ;BERLIN

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A. Lead Stories Summary

HEADLINES

Corporate Tax Reform Suffers Setback (Frankfurter Allgemeine)

Bundeswehr Guarded U.S. Camp In Afghanistan (Sueddeutsche Zeitung)

Germans Guarded U.S. Prison In Afghanistan (Die Welt)

Bundeswehr Had 'Contacts' With Kurnaz (Frankfurter Rundschau)

Bundeswehr Had Contacts With Kurnaz (Tagesspiegel)

Bundeswehr Knew Of Kidnapped German (Berliner Zeitung)

Editorials focused on the aftermath of Murat Kurnaz's TV interview, the debate over a new "underclass" in Germany, and the court decision on the breach of trust accusations against ex-Chancellor Kohl's Interior Minister Manfred Kanther. ZDF-TV's early evening newscast heute opened with a story on the retrial of former interior minister Kanther. ARD-TV's early evening newscast Tagesschau opened with a report on parliamentary reactions to allegations by Guantnamo prisoner Murat Kurnaz that he was abused by German KSK soldiers in Afghanistan.

B. (DPRK) Secretary Rice In East Asia

1. "Axis Of Evil"

G|nther Nonnenmacher commented in center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine (10/19):

"U.S. Secretary of State Rice is rushing about from one trouble spot to the next but no change to the better can be noticed.... One gets the impression that rogue states want to demonstrate to Washington what the axis of evil is able to do."

2. "New Thinking In Beijing"

Kirstin Wenk editorialized in right-of-center Die Welt of Berlin (10/19):

"The more Beijing is disappointed about its protg, the closer

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China moves toward the United States. We saw brand new pictures of the relationship between the two rivaling superpowers. The American and Chinese UN ambassadors attended a press conference together to call on North Korea to return to the six-party talks.... China had hoped it could strengthen reformers in Pyongyang in order to nudge the country softly in China's direction: economic liberalization but no change in the political system. With the nuclear test, Kim Jong-Il made clear that he does not think much of this idea. It is now up to Beijing to decide whether it will continue to stand by Kim. It cannot be in anybody's interest, including the U.S., to completely break with him because it increases the danger that the leadership in Pyongyang run amok. The nuclear test would then be only the beginning."

(source: FT Deutschland)

3. "Learning From North Korea"

Arno Widmann remarked in left-of-center Berliner Zeitung (10/19):

"The only hope we have in this period of escalation is that Iranian President Ahmadinejad and his North Korean colleague Kim Jong-Il not overestimate their powers, like the American President [in Iraq]. The recent years were a gruesome time in which the U.S. was a terrifying power. We are only slowly realizing how awful it could get if the world learns that nobody has to fear the United States anymore."

4. "Obstinate"

Jürgen Schultz opined in center-right Ostsee-Zeitung of Rostock (10/19):

"The message to North Korea in the nuclear dispute is getting tougher. For days, Pyongyang has been condemning the diplomatically weakened UN resolution as a declaration of war, including the rather symbolic sanctions against the isolated regime. The country is now even threatening to conduct a second nuclear test. The response by the international community has so far been limited to making calls on the country. This was useless, especially because the North Korean military leaders are obstinate and believe they are untouchable as a nuclear power. What's next? It is clear that neither the UN nor the U.S. are interested in an escalation of the dispute with the unpredictable North Korea.... There is no alternative for the U.S., China, Japan, South Korea, and Russia, but to persuade Pyongyang to return to negotiations. That is the place to make clear to North Korea, which is economically poor but well equipped with weaponry, that it can only avoid complete bankruptcy and isolation if it gives up its expensive bomb."

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5. Centrist Badische Zeitung of Freiburg (10/19) noted:

"U.S. policy seems to be contradictory. Saddam Hussein was toppled in Iraq, although the despot did not even get close to nuclear weapons. In Iran, Washington does not rule out a military strike to destroy nuclear sites, while India's and Pakistan's bombs are being tolerated. Although the U.S. might have a reason for every individual case, U.S. policy is losing the power to persuade others because it sacrifices a consistent strategy to contain nuclear weapons for relatively short-term international relations."

C. (U.S.) Foreign Policy

1. "America's Crash"

Stefan Kornelius opined in an editorial in center-left Sueddeutsche Zeitung of Munich (10/19):

"On 20/11/02, the White House published the 'National Security Strategy.'... It was evidence of American hubris, a documentation of the imperial moment. The United States was at the zenith of its greatness. But half a year later, the Iraq war began...and today, four years later, the U.S. secretary of state can travel anywhere in the world...and everywhere she is confronted with the limits of U.S. influence.... Washington's words no longer weigh so much. America's weakness is now turning into a problem for the world....

"A multipolar world has developed faster than even the greatest Bush critics hoped for four years ago. But the world has not become safer because of this development. The lack of leadership, the incapability of the United States to join alliances, the fear of getting too much involved with others, but mainly the moral and strategic lack of principles in Washington allow centrifugal forces to grow. What formerly belonged together is now splitting up. No alliance is strong enough to safeguard stability and cohesiveness. The epicenter of this wave of destruction is in Iraq where the U.S. weakness is reflected by dozens of killed soldiers. The impact of this development can be seen in the Middle East and Iran in particular...and now we have North Korea....

"The U.S. administration did not create these problems but it exacerbated them through its policy.... Bush's original sin, published on 20/11/02, cannot be atoned for by the secretary of state and her manifold diplomatic overtures. No one will forgive President Bush this imperial hubris... On the contrary, even in the United States criticism is becoming tougher.... But once all the malicious glee has vanished, the insight will spread that the world will not profit from a lack of power to create order in the world.... In East Asia, Condoleezza Rice could test a new policy.

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America must open up again, must use all instruments of foreign policy to restore its influence. Mutual talks at the highest level with North Korea are still out of the question but by cooperating with China, it should be possible to lure North Korea out of its isolation. Washington must give again, for instance with a new initiative for non proliferation. Only if Washington again makes its contribution to the global security account, can it expect a dividend."

D. (Iraq) Iraq Study Group

1. "Following The Slogan To Stay The Course"

Michael Stürmer had this to say in an editorial in right-of-center Die Welt of Berlin (10/19):

"Criticism of the diplomatic self-paralysis is obvious when the experienced lawyer and ex-secretary of state James Baker III teaches the inflexible George W. Bush that 'it is necessary to talk with one's enemies,' and he refers to Iran and Syria.... Baker's remarks should open up new latitude and new possibilities to act, whether Bush likes it or not. They should also help Republicans save face and enable the United States to assume the leading role in the world which has got bogged down in the quicksand in Iraq."

E. (Russia-Georgia) Tensions

1. Horst Klduser commented on regional radio station Westdeutscher Rundfunk of Cologne (10/18):

"For a long time[Russian policy towards Georgia] has had nothing to do with a justified policy. But it rather looks like a personal settlement of old accounts with Georgian President Saakashvili who, guided by President George W. Bush, does everything to challenge Russian President Putin and his power clique. And the Kremlin allows him to challenge them and reacts in a way that is unworthy of such a vast and powerful country.

"Putin changed Russia into a country where the term democracy is not written in capital letters, but in which the state brutally insists on its rights. It even enjoys the support of broad sectors of society. But that should not mean that the democracies in the West - Germany, the EU and the United States - accept this silently only because they need Russian natural gas. The treatment of Georgia is another disgusting evidence of the Kremlin's reprehensible policy. Clear words to Putin are now necessary."

F. (NPT) Future Of NPT

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1. Center-right Mdrkische Oderzeitung of Frankfurt on the Oder (10/19) had this to say:

"Many countries in the world are preparing for the future distribution fights over oil, natural gas, and water. It is not surprising to realize that nuclear weapons could also play a role. India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea have degraded the Non-Proliferation Treaty into a piece of worthless paper. And the official nuclear powers have not stuck to their commitment to radically disarm. A climate of mutual distrust has developed that will increase the tendency of other nations to tinker around with the bomb."

G. (Economic) German G-8 Agenda

1. "Shirking Instead Of Leading"

Andreas Rinke noted in a front-page editorial in business daily Handelsblatt of Duesseldorf (10/19):

"Once all eyes are directed on Germany on January 1, 2007...when Germany will preside over the most important debates in the club of industrialized nations. This offers the great chance for the middle power to put those issues on the international agenda that it considers to be important. The government has now presented its program but the paper with a potpourri of issues like Africa, energy, the social dimension of globalization, or the control of hedge funds causes helplessness.... Like in the program for the EU presidency, a central thread is not visible....

"Indeed, the German program is suffering from two things: the totally exaggerated expectations of the global economic summit and the self restrictions the grand coalition imposed on itself.... The agenda of the G-8 summits has been totally overburdened. What began as the necessary exchange of information among the powers-that-be has turned into a resolution machine that produces almost nothing but disappointments. In the meantime, the summits have been regarded as an economic global government, even though the G-8 is losing in significance as a consequence of the rise of China and India.... Because of its environment policy, Germany would be predestined to call upon its partners to use natural resources more carefully. And now the unresolved controversy over the use of nuclear energy is responsible for the fact that the government is unable to present a sound concept. Out of fear of a conflict within the coalition, the problem will be not addressed. Even though all G-8 partners, during the last summit, insisted on the use of nuclear energy to reduce carbon dioxide emission, Berlin's answer looks like shirking not leading."

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H. (Sri Lanka) Tensions

1. Center-right Volksstimme of Magdeburg (10/19) said:

"What the tsunami in 2004 did not manage to achieve will now possibly be brought about by the hatred between Singhalese and Tamils: to push Sri Lanka into an abyss. If the safe tourist center in Galle is now turning into a theater for the fight between the two hostile population groups, then the path to a nationwide war in the alleged paradise is not far away. It is especially bitter that Sri Lanka seemed to be pacified in 2002 after the central government and the Tamil tigers tried to end the civil war with a cease-fire. But this was wrong: the model of peaceful co-existence of Singhalese and Tamils has gone down in mutual distrust, flanked by military attacks. Smoking guns are now also threatening to displace

tourists. The fair, but gloomy forecast for Sri Lanka: 30 degrees and sunshine, empty beaches, and senseless killing."

I. (U.S.) New Space Policy

1. "Omnipotent"

Markus Ziener commented in business daily Handelsblatt of D|sseldorf (10/19):

"Spiegel online announced that President Bush declared himself to be the ruler of the universe. This is an exaggeration because the current U.S. space policy is about securing existing systems. The goal is to prevent that the many satellites flying around in space, many of them serving military purposes, not be targeted.... The content of the strategy paper is known: The U.S. does not want to allow others to interfere in space, and the country will therefore not sign any treaties. That might sound hegemonic, but did anybody expect anything else?"

2. "Stop Bush Now"

Peter Brinkmann noted in regional left-of-center tabloid Berliner Kurier (10/19):

"Everything belongs to us, the omnipotent United States. I wonder whether the war-mongering President is now completely crazy. Not that Bush would like all countries of the world to comply with the U.S. security interests; he now also defines space the American way. Europe and its individual countries must stop Bush. This

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megalomania does certainly not contribute to international peace. On the contrary, it arouses fears of war. Stop Bush!"

3. Center-right Nordsee-Zeitung of Bremerhaven (10/19) had this to say:

"With Ronald Reagan, U.S. history knows another President who wanted to get away from problems at home by galactic fantasies. Billions were wasted for a missile-based protection shield in space. He was also rightly met with skepticism, like his political grandson Bush. This is the main evil of U.S. foreign policy. If your claim of leadership makes the rest of the world see you as power-hungry, you will not persuade anybody of potentially good goals. If you create mistrust you will get discord."

J. (Europe) Muslims In European Society

1. "Under the Veil"

London correspondent Matthias Thibaut opined in an editorial in centrist Der Tagesspiegel of Berlin (10/19):

"The British and the Labor government have begun to correct their 'multiculturalism' strategy, a policy they have pursued in a dogmatic way for almost 30 years.... After long hesitance, even Premier Blair said the veil is a symbol of segregation and hinders Muslim women from taking part in a modern society.... Multiculturalism has not only protected turbans and veils but also the refusal to integrate into society. The women who stylishly veiled themselves are not an expression of multiculturalism; they show how parallel societies were able to develop under the protection of multiculturalism.

"Now Muslims are confronted with the fact that tolerance in a pluralist society is linked to the commitment to adjust to expectations and claims of such a society. This will not be an easy process for Muslims.... British society is tolerant. But out of

respect, British female journalists wear a headscarf in Muslim countries. Why should Muslim women, out of respect for a society that wants to see their faces, not accept the limits of veiling?"

K. (Germany) Reaction To Murnaz Interview

1. Anke Mai commented on regional radio station Norddeutscher Rundfunk of Hamburg (10/18):

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"Why did no one in Berlin care about Murnaz? Was it part of the close cooperation in the fight against terror or part of the promised unrestricted solidarity in the anti-terror fight which ex-chancellor Schröder proclaimed when people were arrested at random? Did people forget that that one tolerated unfair systems to atone for injustices they suffered before? What did the German government know about all this? It does not really play a role whether Kurnaz was really kicked by German soldiers, or whether they pulled his hair. Of course, it would be shocking if the accusations were true. But isn't it enough to call for consequences?...

"The argument we hear again and again today is that the times were different because one was fighting terrorists at that time.... But these arguments are shocking. An enormous secrecy is now being revealed and we can only hope that the fact-finding committee dealing with Kurnaz can illuminate a case that is increasingly trying to swallow the truth."

2. "Defensive"

Daniel Deckers had this to say in an editorial in center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine (10/19):

"By interviewing KSK soldiers, the Defense Ministry learned that two of the special task force members had contacts with Turkish-born Murat Kurnaz in Afghanistan before he was brought to Guantanamo. But the Ministry did not reveal information on the exact time of this meeting.... In view of the attention this case has drawn in Germany, even during his imprisonment, it would have been good if the Bundeswehr had initiated its investigation earlier and would not have reacted to accusations which Kurnaz raised after his return. With its defensive information policy, the government again and again created the impression that it wants to hush up things. KSK soldiers had the order to hunt Taliban in the framework of "Operation Enduring Freedom" (ODE). But obviously they were consulted to interrogate a Turkish national whom the Americans found suspicious and who spoke German. What is reprehensible about this matter if nothing else happened?"

3. "The Limits Of Secrecy"

Center-left Sueddeutsche Zeitung of Munich (10/19) noted:

"There is no reason to keep the matter secret any longer. The events happened long ago and ongoing operations can no longer be jeopardized. But openness is now absolutely necessary because...Murnaz's accusations...carry weight. Only a watertight investigation can prevent damage from the Bundeswehr and free the KSK from the suspicion that it misused the trust bonus it received

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from parliament and the public.... Irrespective of this, it is necessary to find out whether Kurnaz or CIA victim Khaled el-Masri's case were politically correctly handled. In the SPD, all indications are that the SPD wants to make former defense minister Scharping the scapegoat. But what should be avoided at any case is that the Bundestag Defense Committee turn into a secretly meeting fact-finding committee to prevent the public from learning more about Kurnaz's case."

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